

INTERVIEW WITH DENNIS LUNDBERG
BY DOROTHE NORTON NOVEMBER 15, 2002
HUDSON, WISCONSIN

MS. NORTON: Dennis, can you tell us where you were born and when?

MR. LUNDBERG: I was born September 8, 1935 in Frederick, Wisconsin.

MS. NORTON: What were your parents' names?

MR. LUNDBERG: Fred Lundberg and Agnes Bergstrom Lundberg.

MS. NORTON: What were their jobs and education?

MR. LUNDBERG: My dad was a school administrator all of this life. He got a certificate from the Wisconsin Teachers Association for forty-six years of service. My mom was more or less a homemaker.

MS. NORTON: That's good! Did you spend all of your early years in Frederick?

MR. LUNDBERG: No, we moved to Webster.

MS. NORTON: How did you spend your early years? What did you do as a boy?

MR. LUNDBERG: I liked to go hunting and fishing. My dad would take me. He was real good to me.

MS. NORTON: Did you have any hobbies, or books or go to any events that influenced how you felt?

MR. LUNDBERG: No, not really. Like I say I liked going hunting and fishing and going to the movies and church. I tried to be good!

MS. NORTON: Did you ever have any jobs as a child, before you got out of high school?

MR. LUNDBERG: To tell the truth I really didn't. A lot of people have a paper route or something like that, but I didn't.

MS. NORTON: What high school did you graduate from?

MR. LUNDBERG: I graduate from Clear Lake High School, in Clear Lake, Wisconsin, in 1953.

MS. NORTON: Did you go to any universities?

MR. LUNDBERG: I went to business school in Minneapolis, to the Minnesota School of Business and the Dunwoody Institute.

MS. NORTON: How long did you go there?

MR. LUNDBERG: It was one year of business school and a couple of years at trade school.

MS. NORTON: Very good for you Dennis, so that's how you got to be so smart! Were you ever in the military?

MR. LUNDBERG: No, I wasn't.

MS. NORTON: And you never got married?

MR. LUNDBERG: No.

MS. NORTON: So you don't have kids either do you?
After you finished school and were looking for work, did you want to work for FWS?

MR. LUNDBERG: At that time it was kind of hard to get jobs, and I always thought that a civil service job to be secure. I got into the FWS and I had a secure job for thirty-five years.

MS. NORTON: What was your first position?

MR. LUNDBERG: I was hired as a printing press operator.

MS. NORTON: Where did you go from there?

MR. LUNDBERG: I moved up to mail clerk.

MS. NORTON: Is that what you were for the rest of your career?

MR. LUNDBERG: Right.

MS. NORTON: Did you have any promotion opportunities?

MR. LUNDBERG: I kind of went up through to the higher grades as time went on, yeah.

MS. NORTON: What was your grade when you retired?

MR. LUNDBERG: I was at step five.

MS. NORTON: When did you retired?

MR. LUNDBERG: In May of 1994.

MS. NORTON: What did you think the pay and benefits were like when you started?

MR. LUNDBERG: At first, they weren't so good. But after a while of being in there they were real good I thought. I was a GS-2 when I started.

MS. NORTON: Did you socialize with people that you worked with?

MR. LUNDBERG: I got along with everybody. That was part of the job, getting along with everybody!

MS. NORTON: Did you ever do anything for recreation with the people from the field offices or the regional office?

MR. LUNDBERG: No, not too much that way.

MS. NORTON: So you didn't bowl or play ball or anything?

MR. LUNDBERG: No, well, I played softball a little bit.

MS. NORTON: Did you ever get any kind of specialized training for your job?

MR. LUNDBERG: No, not really.

MS. NORTON: So who taught you how to be the mail clerk?

MR. LUNDBERG: The guy who had the job before I did. He kind of broke me in. I just kind of got on the job training by myself.

MS. NORTON: Did you work regular hours?

MR. LUNDBERG: Yes I did. I was on what they called the compressed workweek.

MS. NORTON: What were your day-to-day duties?

MR. LUNDBERG: Mainly taking care of the mail, the incoming and outgoing mail.

MS. NORTON: What did you do with the incoming?

MR. LUNDBERG: I opened it and decided where to send it; to the different branches and that.

MS. NORTON: Did you have any special tools or instruments to use while you were doing this?

MR. LUNDBERG: No, not really, just a lot of letter openers.

MS. NORTON: There must have been a lot of “Dear Sirs” and “Dear Madams”! Did you ever see any new Service inventions or innovations, which could help or be used in your job?

MR. LUNDBERG: Yeah, when they’d send out news releases and such, there was a machine that would stuff the envelopes.

MS. NORTON: That probably helped you!

MR. LUNDBERG: It sure did!

MS. NORTON: Did you ever do any work with any animals?

MR. LUNDBERG: No.

MS. NORTON: How do you think that people outside of FWS they felt about our agency?

MR. LUNDBERG: They knew it was a conservation agency. Everybody was kind of interested in conservation. I think they really liked the agency. I liked it too!

MS. NORTON: Where you ever involved in any special projects of any kind?

MR. LUNDBERG: No, not really.

MS. NORTON: Were there ever any major issues that you had to deal with?

MR. LUNDBERG: There was always something like the timber wolves, so something like that! [Joking]

MS. NORTON: Who were you supervisors?

MR. LUNDBERG: Willard Bitner and John Mullins.

MS. NORTON: When you first started, who were they?

MR. LUNDBERG: That was a long time ago! Mr. Lundt, his name was, and Mel Anderson.

MS. NORTON: Who do you think the individuals were who helped to shape your career?

MR. LUNDBERG: I think Mel Anderson helped me a lot. And Willard Bitner too. Mainly, if you did your job, you weren't bothered at all. I think that's what I did most of the time.

MS. NORTON: And you did a good job Dennis, yes you did!

MR. LUNDBERG: Oh, thank you!

MS. NORTON: Did you know any other people who were not working for the FWS, but you thought they might be able to?

MR. LUNDBERG: No, not really. I just told them that I thought I had a good deal because I did!

MS. NORTON: And you did!

MR. LUNDBERG: Yeah, right!

MS. NORTON: Do you remember at all any of the Presidents, Secretaries of the Interior or Director's of the FWS that you served under?

MR. LUNDBERG: I liked all of the Directors pretty well, like Mr. Burwell. He was the first one I think. They all seemed to be pretty nice.

MS. NORTON: You don't remember who was President when you started, or when you retired?

MR. LUNDBERG: I can't right now.

MS. NORTON: Did you ever have a high point in your career?

MR. LUNDBERG: I got the Civil Servant of the Year Award. They had nice banquet and I thought that was fun to go to.

MS. NORTON: And you felt good to be the Civil Servant of the Year?

MR. LUNDBERG: I sure did!

MS. NORTON: But you worked hard to earn that! Was there ever any low point in your career?

MR. LUNDBERG: No, there weren't any real low points. Like I say, I just did my job.

MS. NORTON: What was the most humorous thing you had to go through?

MR. LUNDBERG: Well that's a good question, but I can't really remember one in particular.

MS. NORTON: There were too many?

MR. LUNDBERG: Well, like I say, when you were at the FWS you were treated like a member of the family. If somebody had a birthday party or something I'd go back to my office, and I'd have a nice piece of birthday cake waiting for me.

MS. NORTON: What did you tell your other friends or family about your career or about the FWS?

MR. LUNDBERG: I just told them that I enjoyed working for the government because of the security. And I told them that I liked working for a conservation agency too. A lot of people worked for different agencies and they didn't like their job at all. But they were just glad that they had a job.

MS. NORTON: What were some of the changes that you noticed in the FWS during your career?

MR. LUNDBERG: When we first started out in an old building on Lake Street. Then we moved to a brand new building out at Fort Snelling. That was a big change for the better.

MS. NORTON: Did you have any new equipment then, which helped make your job easier?

MR. LUNDBERG: Oh yeah, it was much easier. There was a new cart to push downstairs and bring up the mail. There were elevators too. It was just much better all the way around.

MS. NORTON: Were you always the only mail clerk?

MR. LUNDBERG: Most of the time I had an assistant who worked part-time.

MS. NORTON: What did the assistant do to assist you?

MR. LUNDBERG: They would do the job when I was gone on leave, or sick or something. They helped me out with lots of things.

MS. NORTON: Did you ever notice any big changes in the personnel at the regional office or even in the field?

MR. LUNDBERG: Well, not too much. There were some people where I knew their name on the boxes, but I didn't know the person at all.

MS. NORTON: What about the environment? Did you ever notice any changes in the office environment there?

MR. LUNDBERG: Yes, they were always changing things all of the time. "Reorganize", that was the word!

MS. NORTON: What are your thoughts on the future as far as the FWS? Where do you think it's going to be going in the next decade or so?

MR. LUNDBERG: Well, I think they are going to have to preserve more land and stuff and preserve all they can. With the population exploding and exploring, everybody wants to buy something you know. If it wouldn't be for federal, state and county lands there wouldn't be any place natural where people could go hiking or hunting and fishing.

MS. NORTON: So you think that FWS will still be accepted by everyone, and that we should be able to keep going along at about the speed we're going now?

MR. LUNDBERG: I think so.

MS. NORTON: Do you have any photographs that you'd like to share, or put into the archives? Maybe any letters, or commendations or anything?

MR. LUNDBERG: No, honestly I don't have anything like that.

MS. NORTON: You didn't save any of that good stuff?

MR. LUNDBERG: No, I didn't.

MS. NORTON: You were very good to have served for all of the years that you did at the grade that you did, that's wonderful!

MR. LUNDBERG: Thanks!

MS. NORTON: Whom else do you think we should be interviewing? We are trying to get as many as we can, but do you think there is anybody who stands out in mind?

MR. LUNDBERG: There was my carpool partner, Cal Gale. Do you know him? He lives over in Baldwin. He works for FWS part-time now. But he's retired from FWS too.

MS. NORTON: Well that about takes care of our interview Dennis. I want to thank you for your time. It was just great that we could get together like this; I haven't seen you for a long time. Thank you Dennis!